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Montana Pupil Transportation News and Updates March/April 2004



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A Bi-Monthly Newsletter Published by Pupil Transportation, School Budgeting and Accounting Division

Since You Asked

What are the deadlines for filing the paperwork necessary to receive state and county transportation reimbursement?

There are several deadlines associated with producing an accurate and complete reimbursement. All of the pieces of the reimbursement are controlled by deadlines established in Administrative Rule.

First semester school bus inspections are to be completed 30 days prior to the first day of school. Second semester school bus inspections are to be completed by January 31. These forms must be submitted to the OPI upon completion. What that means is once the form is approved and signed by the highway patrolman, it is due to the OPI.

The elementary and high school TR-1 (School Bus Route) forms are due in October. Amended route forms are accepted throughout the year as changes to the original routes are made and approved by the County Transportation Committee. Pre-printed TR-1 documents based on the previous year's information will be posted to the web site at www.opi.state.mt.us/pupiltransport under Finance as needed throughout the school year.

The TR-4 Individual Transportation Contracts are due to the County Superintendent on the 4th Monday in June and are due to the OPI in mid-July for any family that has previously lived in the district. New TR-4's will be accepted throughout the year as families move into the district. The pre-printed documents based on the previous year's information will be posted to the web site at www.opi.state.mt.us/pupiltransport under Finance and Budgeting as needed throughout the school year.

Once the TR-13's, TR-1's, and TR-4's have been received and entered into the data management system, TR-5's and TR-6's are printed and mailed to the district by mid January. First Semester TR-5 and TR-6 documents are due to the County Superintendent by February 1 and to the OPI by February 15. Second Semester TR-13's are due to OPI on the same day. Second Semester TR-5's and TR-6's are

mailed to the districts in mid-April and due to the County Superintendent by May 10 and due to the OPI by May 24th.

These deadlines are set by Administrative Rule and will be strictly enforced. **If a school district does not submit its TR-5 and TR-6 claims for reimbursement by the due date of that document, that district's reimbursement will not be paid until the following scheduled payment.**

Transportation reimbursement payments are made by the 25th of March and the 25th of June with the State Aid Payments. All notice of payment will be posted to the web site at www.opi.state.mt.us/pupiltransport under the heading of Finance and Budgeting.

Questions and comments can be directed to me in writing at mmougeot@state.mt.us.

What happens when parents in a small area want to hire a contractor to take their children to a school outside their school of residence and how much should that cost?

Parents can hire anyone they trust to take their children to any school they choose. No public funds can be used. It is advisable to have a written agreement between both parties to spell out the details of the arrangement. Both parties should consider liability issues, sick kids and parents arriving home later than planned.

Parents that decide to take their children to a school outside the boundaries of their school of residence are responsible to pay their own costs. The arrangement between the parents and the transportation provider would be a private contract with the dollar amounts that meet the needs of both parties.

If a bus is being used, parents should require that the transportation provider uses a vehicle that meets the Montana Standards for Construction as required by law when transporting students to and from school. The parents should require that the vehicle be inspected and the driver should be certified. The SCHOOL BUS sign on the bus has to be covered when services are paid for by private individuals. Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 20-10-101(b) states "A school bus does not include a vehicle that

is: (i) privately owned and not operated for compensation under this title.”

Safety Rules Urged for Day-Care Drivers...

Greg Beach of Beach Transportation in Missoula sent me an interesting article from the Associated Press today. The article written by Leslie Miller warns state agencies in charge of overseeing child care centers should require background checks for drivers. The article further stated these centers should stop using 15-passenger vans that are susceptible to rollovers. There aren't any requirements for background checks, medical examinations or drug testing for the drivers of these vehicles.

Several accidents have occurred. The government previously has warned that 15-passenger vans have a dramatically higher risk of rollovers when fully loaded and only should be operated by experienced drivers.

Quote of the Month

"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

- Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931)

Missing Video Tapes

Some of the video tapes from the OPI Video Library have not been returned. If you have any of the following, please send them back as soon as possible.

1. Fatigue
2. Safety Techniques for Tying Down Wheelchairs
3. Evacuating a School Bus
4. Professional School Bus Driver Series
 - a. #4 Engaging the Support of School Administrators
 - b. #6 Establishing a Positive Attitude & Taking Care of Yourself
 - c. #7 Handling Students with Special Needs

Once the drivers have watched a tape, please ask them to take a moment to complete the tape evaluation that is included with the tape. This information is utilized when decisions to purchase new videos are made.

The OPI contact for ordering training videos is Raelen Williard at the Resource Center. Raelen's phone number is (406) 444-2082. Raelen can be reached by email at rwilliard@state.mt.us or fax at (406) 444-3924. The Training Library list can be found at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/pupiltransport/TrainingVideos.pdf>.

TRANSPORTATION WEB SITE HAS A NEW LOOK

Check it out – go to www.opi.state.mt.us/pupiltransport and see what you can find. Our Informational Services Division works hard to keep the web sites current and all the links working appropriately.

Notice under [Safety/Statistics/Contact Information](#) is a document titled [Transportation Contact Directory](#). Please open the document, find your district and see if the information is correct. Send me an email at mmougeot@state.mt.us if there is information that needs to be corrected.

MAPT Conference Information

The Montana Association for Pupil Transportation has sent out the registration forms for the June 23-25, 2004 Conference to be held in Lewistown at the Lewistown High School. The conference title is "2004 Reasons for Safety." Registration is due to Betty Kunkel at MAPT by June 1st. The registration fee is \$70 if paid by June 1.

Conference information is included in the OPI mailing for April. If you need additional copies of any of the materials, just send an email to me at mmougeot@state.mt.us. Registration materials can be found on the Pupil Transportation web site at www.opi.state.mt.us. Choose <Pupil Transportation> from the Programs and Services drop down list. Information will be posted under <Training>.

Conference events include First Aid Renewal Class, School Bus Road-e-o, vendor presentations, good food, peer communication and many interesting workshop sessions and speakers. One way to save money is to offer to bring a bus full of drivers and share expenses with other districts. See you there!!

IMPORTANT DATES



Mid April – Second Semester 2003-2004 TR-5's & TR-6's mailed to districts

Mid April – First Semester 2004-2005 TR-13's mailed to districts

May 10, 2004 – Completed TR-5's & TR-6's due to County

May 25, 2004 – Completed TR-5's & TR-6's due to State

June 23 – 25, 2004 - MAPT Conference – Lewistown
Contact Betty Kunkel at (406) 454-6776

June 25, 2004 – Second Semester Transportation Aid payment

4th Monday in June – County Transportation Committee must approve or disapprove all bus routes and Individual Transportation Contracts (ITC) Districts must complete and sign ITC's for the ensuing year

July 10, 2004 – County Superintendent must send one copy of all ITC's to the OPI

Buster/Barney



Adoption Application

Buster and Barney, Robotic School Buses, are available for adoption to good homes. Please complete the following application if your district is interested in providing Buster or Barney with a nurturing home, requiring no help or guidance (monetary or physical) from the OPI. Please note that both of them currently need repairs, so the district will be accepting a robot "as is."

Name of District:

Name of person who will be responsible for Buster or Barney:

Why do you want to adopt Buster or Barney? (attach additional sheets if necessary)

How are you planning to utilize Buster or Barney? (attach additional sheets if necessary)

Where will Buster or Barney be living? (inside storage required)

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | Do you understand that the district must be willing to complete periodic maintenance on Buster or Barney? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | Do you understand that the district must be willing to complete mechanical repairs when necessary, which may involve transporting the robot to the manufacturer or other robotics technician? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | Will the adoptive district agree to loan Barney or Buster to another district with training or direct supervision supplied by adoptive district? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | Will the adoptive district be available to pick up Buster or Barney from the current foster home (OPI in Helena)? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | |

The above information is true to the best of my knowledge and my signature below is verification that the district will be able to provide a good home to Buster or Barney.

Name

Title

Signature

Date

Submit completed application by June 1, 2004, to:

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